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SUBJECT: UNESCO: EXECUTIVE BOARD DECISION ON EFA

**¶11. (SBU) SUMMARY:** UNESCO adopted a decision on a Report by the Director-General on the Global Action Plan to achieve the Education For All (EFA) Goals at the 174th Executive Board. In late March, the U.K. together with Program and External Relations Commission chair Norway convened a working group to redraft the Secretariat draft decision in advance of the board meeting. Participants were Brazil (representing GRULAC) India (representing the g-77) and France and the U.S. as Group I members. Negotiations were primarily driven by a strong desire among member states to maintain EFA momentum and to add myriad laundry lists of priorities to the plan, including pressure on the G-8 for funds. Strong advance efforts in the working group avoided a potentially brutal and contentious debate during the Executive Board. END SUMMARY.

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WORKING GROUP PROPOSALS:  
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**¶12. (SBU)** The UK and Norway told participants that they had convened the working group, which met periodically from March 30 to April 6, out of dissatisfaction with the draft Global Action Plan report in and of itself and the vague text of its accompanying draft decision.

All working group members expressed frustration that the plan was incomplete, and Ambassador Oliver steered discussion toward the importance of getting the 5 convening EFA agencies to agree on their appropriate roles rather than moving forward with a detailed plan that might set unrealistic goals in haste. ADG Peter Smith, she noted, has been told by previous Executive Boards that the plan should be conceptual and concise. (COMMENT: This helped to deflect most attempts at departing long laundry lists of initiatives and goals that member states wanted to add to the decision. END COMMENT.) The UK wanted clearer language about the plan being endorsed by the Executive Board in October and then by the heads of 5 convening agencies, but Mission maintained the argument that we would not want to pressure the next Executive Board to endorse a plan that might not be ready.

**¶13. (SBU)** Brazil, speaking on behalf of GRULAC member states and supported by India, still wanted more references to South-South and other triangular modes of cooperation, and to a myriad of issues outlined at the November 2005 Beijing meeting. Speaking on behalf of the g-77, India pushed hard for language that recognized the need to mobilize extra funds to achieve EFA goals and called upon potential donors to make increased commitments. Mission argued that the plan should not be seen primarily as a fundraising vehicle. Although sympathetic to India, the UK maintained that a deadline was necessary to maintain momentum. After much negotiation, Mission succeeded in moving the deadline to mid-July, noting that this would be a deadline for review only and deleting the word "acceptance" from the text. At the end of the working group negotiations, France, UK, Brazil, Norway and India offered to co-sponsor the new draft decision and lobby other member states. Mission noted that while it would not break consensus with the working group's draft decision, it would not be a co-sponsor.

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PX Debate:  
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**¶14. (SBU)** During interventions, member states almost universally lamented the fact that the plan was not yet ready and cited the importance of maintaining momentum. Requests to amend the text beyond the working group's proposed changes were few because the working group's co-sponsors built significant support for the new draft decision in advance. Russia expressed strong concern that a mid-July deadline for the GAP was too late for the G-8 meetings, but Ambassador Oliver was able to work out last minute compromise language stating "as soon as possible, at the latest by mid-July 2006." The Ambassador from Mali requested references to "the convening 5 agencies of Bamako and Jomtien", where EFA meetings were previously held. Mali also inserted language calling for the inclusion of civil society, which we supported.

**¶15. (U)** The text of the adopted draft decision can be found on the UNESCO Website as Executive Board document 174 EX/48 parts I and II, or on page 5 of the overall document list entitled EX Main Series, under Executive Board documents.

Oliver